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D I S C O U R S E

ON THE DEATH OF

JOHN THORNTON, Esq.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]



The LOVE of CHRIST the Source of genuine
PHILANTHROPY.

A
DISCOURSE
ON

II COR. CHAP. V. VER. 14, 15.

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

JOHN THORNTON, Esq. K

LATE OF CLAPHAM, SURRY:

CONTAINING

OBSERVATIONS

ON HIS

CHARACTER AND PRINCIPLES.

L O N D O N:

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M.DCC.XCI.



THE following Discourse was not
penned, in order to be delivered from the
Pulpit; and therefore the Writer deemed
himself authorized to exceed the ordinary Li-
mits of a Sermon. Indeed he found it impos-
sible to comprise an Account both of the
Character, and Principles of his late honored
Friend, within a much smaller Compass, than
he hath here taken.

THE following Diseases were not

and most powerful of all, the

...and the White House...

12. 11. 1954

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DISCOURSE

ii COR. CHAP. V. VER. 14, 15.

FOR THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINETH US; BECAUSE WE THUS JUDGE, THAT IF ONE DIED FOR ALL, THEN WERE ALL DEAD; AND THAT HE DIED FOR ALL, THAT THEY WHICH LIVE, SHOULD NOT HENCEFORTH LIVE UNTO THEMSELVES, BUT UNTO HIM, WHICH DIED FOR THEM, AND ROSE AGAIN.

THE character of the Apostle Paul exhibits to our view so many excellencies, that most professed Christians have admired, or affected to admire it. His piety, zeal, philanthropy, disinterestedness, patience, meekness, and fortitude, have never perhaps been equalled by any mere

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man: yet his principles were by no means fully understood by his coteremporaries; and there appeared such singularities in his conduct, that he was sometimes compelled to apologize for himself, and for the exuberance of his zeal, even to Christians, and to those who had been converted by his ministry. Thus, in the verse preceding the text, he says, "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause:" and then he adds, "For the love of Christ constraineth us," &c. Here then he informs us, that the whole drift and tenor of his conduct, whether it appeared to them wise and excellent, or whether they deemed it strange and extravagant, proceeded from this single principle, "The love of Christ," which even "constrained him to live no longer to himself, but to him who died for him, and rose again."

The death and resurrection of Christ, and the benefits which he thence derived, gave a new direction to his conduct, and this extraordinary turn to his whole character.

The consideration of his own former condition, the sense of his deliverance, the astonishing price that the Savior had paid for his redemption, and the joyful hope of everlasting life now springing up within him, produced gratitude in some measure proportionate to his obligations, and impelled him

him with invincible energy to devote himself and all his powers to the active service of his Divine Benefactor. Nor does he seem to have been much concerned about the effects, which this might have on his interest, reputation, ease, liberty, or even life itself.

Such was St. Paul: the love of Christ constrained him, and this ruling principle animated him to persevere in every virtue, and to abound in every good work; to face every danger, and to surmount every obstacle, which he met with in his course.

It is not, however, the design of this Discourse to enter more fully into the principles from which St. Paul acted, or to treat directly on the doctrines contained in the text: but rather thence to take occasion to make some observations on the character of a person, eminent in the religious world, who is lately deceased; whose situation in society was indeed very different from that of the Apostle; so that in this and many other circumstances no parallel can be drawn betwixt them: yet we may confidently say, that like to St. Paul, the tenor of his conduct, during a great part of his life, was actuated by the constraining love of Christ.

In prosecution of this design, I purpose,

- I. To point out some of the most striking peculiarities in the character which we are to consider.
- II. To advert to some of those religious principles, that gave rise to this peculiarity of character and conduct.
- III. To shew, that the same principles, wherever they really exist, must of course produce the same effects: allowing indeed for difference in situation, natural temper, and other things of a like kind.

Having established these premises, I shall conclude with deducing a few practical inferences from them.

In treating, according to the first thing proposed, of the character of that person, whose lamented death and honored memory gave occasion to this Discourse, it is peculiarly proper, that we should mention what we are sure no man will dispute, viz.

- I. That he was distinguished by his great liberality: that he disposed of very large sums in various charitable designs, with an unremitting constancy,

stancy, during a long course of years: and that his charities were much larger, than is common with wealthy persons of good reputation for beneficence; insomuch, that he was rather regarded as a prodigy, which might excite astonishment, than as an example, that other men of equal affluence were in duty bound to imitate: and yet it is apprehended, that his character hath not been in this respect over-stated, and that few persons were acquainted with the full extent of his charities.

In respect to this leading circumstance, we must advert to several particulars.

In dispensing his bounty it is well known, that he always aimed to promote the knowledge and practice of the religion of the Bible amongst mankind; and to bring the careless, the ignorant, the profane, and the profligate, to attend to the concerns of their souls, to repent, and turn to God, and "to do works meet for repentance." For this purpose also he was the patron of all pious, exemplary, and laborious ministers of the Gospel; frequently educating young men, whom he found to be religiously disposed; and purchasing many livings, not so much with a view of benefiting the individuals, to whom he gave them, as for the sake of planting useful ministers of the Gospel in those parts, where he supposed the people to be perishing for lack of knowledge.

He also dispersed a very great number of Bibles, in different languages, in distant countries, perhaps even in all the four quarters of the globe; and with them vast quantities of such books as he thought most suited to alarm the conscience, to affect the heart with a sense of the importance of eternal things, and to lead men to repentance, faith in Christ, and holiness of life; thus labouring to render those, whom he never saw, wise unto salvation: and no doubt numbers will for ever bless God for these his pious and charitable endeavors.

But though his liberality had this for its grand object, yet it was by no means conducted on an exclusive principle. He aimed to adorn and recommend, as well as to spread, the religion which he professed, and to shew its genuine tendency in his own conduct towards all men. In subserviency to this design, and from the most enlarged and expanded philanthropy, he adopted, supported, and patronized every undertaking, which was suited to supply the wants, to relieve the distresses, or to increase the comforts of any of the human species, in whatever climate, or of whatever description, provided they properly fell within his sphere of action. Perhaps it would even be difficult to mention one public or private charity of evident utility, to which he was not, at one time or other, in some measure a benefactor. So that he plainly observed the command,

mand, "to do good to all men, especially to them
"that are of the household of faith."

And here it should especially be noted, that his beneficence was not always withheld, even on account of the extreme wickedness of those, that were to receive the advantage of it; but that he was guided, in this respect, by the prospect of doing them good, either in respect of their temporal or eternal welfare; as might be abundantly proved by many striking instances, were it necessary. This, with kindness to enemies, forms a distinguishing feature in the Christian character, and can only be produced by those principles, which we shall hereafter consider. And though this peculiarity be here only just hinted at; yet it is hoped, that it will be carefully considered, being of great importance, in order to a right understanding of the subject of this discourse.

It is in the next place worthy of observation, that this friend of mankind, in the exercise of his beneficence, not only contributed his money, (which often is done to very little purpose,) but he devoted his time and thoughts very much to the same object; doing good was the great business of his life, and may more properly be said to have been his occupation, than even his mercantile engagements, which were uniformly considered as subservient to that nobler design.

To form, and execute plans of usefulness; to superintend, arrange, and improve upon those plans; to lay aside such as did not answer, and to substitute others; to form acquaintance, and collect intelligence for this purpose; to select proper agents, and to carry on correspondence, in order to ascertain that his bounties were well applied: these, and similar concerns, were the hourly occupations of his life, and the ends of living, which he proposed to himself; nor did he think that any part of his time was spent either happily, or innocently, if it were not some way instrumental, directly, or indirectly, to the furtherance of useful designs. It is therefore evident, that if he be supposed to have been in any measure true to these principles, the sum total of the good which he did to mankind, by persevering in such habits for many years, must exceed all ordinary computation, and can only be ascertained at the great day of account, and retribution.

As a proof how much his business was rendered subservient to his beneficence, it may be remarked, that he not only made the gains of his commerce, in a great degree, a fund for the support of his charity; but his commerce itself was oftentimes an introduction to the knowledge of the wants, calamities, and deplorable condition of mankind in distant regions of the earth; and a medium, through which to communicate to their necessities;
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and to circulate amongst them the word of God, and other means of instruction, for the benefit of their immortal souls.

To support such numerous and expensive designs of usefulness, without embarrassing his affairs, or interfering with the real interests of his family, he observed a strict frugality in his expences. It was not necessary for him to live in that style, which those that are distinguished by titles, or high offices, deem requisite to their rank and character; and he had no relish for parade and magnificence: thus his very hospitable, but simple manner of life, left a large surplus out of his income, from his regular expences, the chief part of which constantly flowed into the channel of his beneficence; and having tasted the delight of doing good, and finding it "more blessed to give than to receive," or to expend in any other way; he abounded therein with increasing satisfaction. At the same time the God of Truth verified to him his word, which saith, "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth:" for so far from being impoverished by his extraordinary liberality; his estate was considerably augmented with the fairest character for integrity and probity; his children are amply provided for, and reflect with greater satisfaction on the sums, that their honored father expended in doing good, than even on those, by which

which he hath left it in their power to emulate his example.

Frugality like this, is worthy of our most attentive and serious consideration—In fact it laid the foundation of this extraordinary liberality; and the want of it, perhaps, more than a defect in benevolence, is what so much contracts men's ordinary scale of doing good. Strict œconomy on the one hand, and profuse bounty on the other, are qualities that seldom unite in one character, nor is it reasonable to expect that they should. The man of benevolence being averſe to, and afraid of avarice, is commonly free in his own expences: thus his wealth is pre-occupied; and though his heart may be large, yet his means are found inadequate. On the other hand, the œconomist, who reserves a fund that might be sufficient for the execution of the largest designs of beneficence, commonly takes too much delight in accumulating, to part with his wealth by a proportionate liberality. To be plain, frugal, and self-denying in all matters of private expence; and yet liberal in supplying the wants of others, is a combination of different excellencies in one character, which will seldom be found, except where true Christian principles possess and govern the heart. In this case, habitual moderation, and expanded benevolence, grow from the same root; and where the person, in whom they unite, is in affluent circumstances, they cannot fail
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of producing such effects as we have been considering.

Indeed it may be added, that the expences, even of benevolent men, are so much governed by the fashions and customs of the world, that they are greatly cramped even in following the dictates of their own hearts. But the excellency of religion appears conspicuous in this also: for it releases men from this servile subjection to the humours and opinions of mankind, and forbids the usual emulation in superfluous expence: thus it supplies a fund, by which that spirit of philanthropy, which true piety always increases, may be largely gratified; and which being once gratified, will seldom fail to become still more expansive.

II. Having made these observations upon the most public and popular part of the character, which we are contemplating; I would mention, as a second peculiarity, his exact attention to religious duties. Men of light and inconsiderate minds are apt to conceive, that such strictness has little or no connection with the exercise of beneficence; not knowing that the love of God, which induces to, and is advanced by these duties, when they are practised without formality, or hypocrisy, always promotes, in a proportionable degree, the love of our neighbor also. The person, of whom we speak, spent much of his time, especially during the

the latter part of his life, in retirement, and religious exercises: the Lord's day was appropriated to these uses, and entirely rescued from the avocations of ceremonious visits, and even of common hospitality. He found much pleasure in public worship, and in family religion: and it is not therefore wonderful, that having once contracted those habits, which seem stiff and singular at the first; he should afterwards adhere to them, when he found that they tended to improve his heart, to establish his faith, to promote the enjoyment of life, and to comfort him in his declining years, and in the prospect of his approaching dissolution. Nor could it be expected, that he, who employed himself so much in distributing Bibles, and in propagating Christianity in distant nations, should neglect the religious instruction of his own household; or that he should endure that those habits of irreligion, which are so generally disregarded in servants, should be contracted and continued in his own view, and within the sphere of his own immediate influence.

He was also exact and punctual in the private exercises of the closet: He daily read the sacred scriptures with great reverence and attention; and he adhered to rules, which he had formed for himself, from a deliberate consideration of their importance; but, at the same time, he avoided observation, or the affectation of austerity. His meals

meals were early, regular, and temperate; and his life retired, when compared with that of most men, in the same situation in society: He was entirely a stranger to the ordinary pleasures and amusements of the world, nor was he accustomed to consult his own ease or indulgence, in any particular; yet his cheerfulness was noticed by all who conversed with him, and he habitually appeared well satisfied and happy. His fear of alienating his time from more important uses, rendered him, on some occasions, apparently too averse to go into almost any company. But where the motive was so good, and the use made of time thus redeemed, was so worthy of imitation; surely this may be mentioned to his commendation, rather than as a failing; especially, as it increased only with his advancing years, and evidenced a mind more and more occupied with the thoughts of that blessed world, into which he expected so soon to be removed.

III. His unaffected and deep humility may be considered as another distinguishing feature of his character. His liberality, his useful industry, and his piety; though he was zealous and abundant in them all, appeared not to himself in any degree meritorious: Nay, he was convinced, that in every respect, he fell short of his bounden duty, and was entirely dependant on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus for the pardon of his sins, and for final acceptance and felicity.—In truth, he estimated his

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own character and conduct, by comparing them with the strict rule of the divine law, and not with the crooked principles and practices of the world: For he considered himself, and all the race of men, as being naturally in a state of apostacy from God, and exceedingly prone to evil; and he was very earnest in spreading this opinion, as a fundamental doctrine of the Scriptures.

This sentiment, as far as it was applied to himself, will be admitted to have been a source of humility: when applied to others, it is sometimes thought to be of a contrary nature; for a conviction of the general depravity of the human race, is frequently imagined to spring either from spiritual pride, or from a harsh and severe disposition.

Now as the sentiments entertained by our late honored friend, concerning the fallen state of the world around him, undoubtedly made a material part of his character, I shall enter more fully into this circumstance; and the candid reader will then judge, how far this his persuasion was consistent with the general benevolence of his character, which, to some persons, may appear ambiguous or unintelligible.

The main ground, on which this, and the rest of his religious opinions were founded, was the plain declarations of the Bible: And to that book, which
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he studied day by day, endeavouring to imbibe every instruction which it contains, I must refer the reader for a fuller explanation of the subject.—Our late friend, I say, implicitly believed the doctrines of it; and conscious of his own demerit, all his hopes of salvation were derived from it: He expected eternal life, as the gift of God through Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of mercy, and the precious promises contained in the Scriptures; and he found that these were matters in which human reason or authority could give him no assurance or satisfaction.—If then, on the one hand, he believed the promises of the Bible, and derived all his consolation from them, how could he disbelieve the threatenings of God contained in the same Book, and the repeated declarations of the inspired writers, concerning the degeneracy of men, the wickedness of the world, and the comparative small number of those that are in the way of salvation?

Indeed, that kind of charity which we often hear pleaded for, can only be expected, on any grounds of reason, from Infidels and Sceptics, who, consistent with their principles, may deny that there is an hell, or that the way is broad and thronged which leads to it. But in proportion as these sentiments prevail, the sinews will be cut of every effort to bring sinners into the narrow way of repentance, faith, and holiness, in which the word
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of God requires them to walk.—If any, therefore, who would be thought to believe the Bible, compliment their worldly neighbors with unscriptural hopes, or teach them to make light of their danger, it must be owing, (though they may not suspect it,) to no small degree of scepticism mixing with their views of Christianity: And it is difficult to conceive how they can derive any actual hope from the Gospel, who discard all serious fear, and who neither lament nor perceive that state of condemnation, under which, (according to the word of God) every one around them lies; unless he believe in Christ Jesus, be renewed in the spirit of his mind, and lead a sober, righteous, and godly life; or, at least be striving to enter in at the strait gate of repentance, and conversion to God and holiness. It is observable, that the Scripture seems to know but of two descriptions of men, namely, those who serve God, and those who serve him not: he who is not the servant of God, but serves some other master, or aims at some other end, lies under the condemnation of the Bible, though he be free from disreputable vices: And whether the multitude around us are in good earnest serving God, or whether they are pursuing their own selfish ends, let any man of common observation determine.

It must therefore appear to every candid enquirer, that when religious persons entertain, what
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are called, uncharitable opinions of their neighbours, they are in truth compelled to it by the united evidence of facts and scripture; and not inclined to it by a mere conceit of their own superiority, or any severity of disposition.

These sentiments may be often observed, as in the present instance, to reside in the same breast, with the most melting compassion, the most expanded benevolence, and the most unequivocal tokens of deep humility. It is not then an inconsistency, to think mankind very corrupt and wicked, and yet to abound in compassion and charity towards them. This evidently accords to the judgment, and conduct of God himself, as it is every where represented in scripture: "he commended his love to us, in that when we were sinners, ungodly, and enemies, Christ died for us." The blessed Savior was hated for testifying of the world, that the works thereof were evil; yet he "went about doing good," and at length laid down his life, as the propitiation for our sins. St. John, the beloved disciple, who was eminent for the greatness of his charity, says, "We know, that we are of God, and that the whole world lieth in wickedness:" and St. Paul, with a mixture of sound judgment, and genuine charity, says to the Philippians, "There are many of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end

“ is destruction, whose God is their belly, and
 “ whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly
 “ things.” These are a few passages, out of vast
 numbers that might be produced: and it may be
 added, that the world, (signifying the generality of
 mankind,) is scarce ever mentioned in scripture,
 without something being added, which implies a
 condemnation of it.

It is obvious, that these sentiments must be unfashionable, and unpopular; and must exceedingly deduct from the character of every religious man, in the opinion of the world, how much soever he lays himself out, in doing good to the bodies, and souls of men.

Some persons indeed are not aware, that they, who believe the bible, do thus in their judgment condemn the world around them; and they can therefore bear with many true Christians, on account of their philanthropy, having never approached near enough to understand this unpopular subject. It is proper, that such persons should be undeceived, and should know, that they, who believe the word of God, however kind and obliging to them, entertain the most serious apprehensions concerning the state of their souls, and are far more alarmed for them, than they are for themselves. There are also others, that have some sense of religion, and secretly assent to this offensive

live doctrine; but joining much with the world, they deem it convenient to disguise their sentiments. Nay, they frequently behave in a manner so inconsistent with a serious conviction of this kind, that they are never suspected of it: they conform to the world, and seem to be a constituent part of it; and who could imagine, that they join with the scripture in the condemnation of it? These are indeed the more popular characters; yet if their sentiments were fully known, perhaps they would meet with less favor, than they who profess them without disguise, and separate from the pleasures and vanities of the world, and from a needless intercourse with it upon that account. The latter are certainly the more honest men, and would probably, if the whole truth were known, be deemed the more honorable characters, the people of the world themselves being judges.

It is not, however, here meant to be insinuated, that pious persons never form too harsh a judgment concerning their neighbours. A certain precipitancy of temper, and a vehemence in some points of doctrine, or a contracted acquaintance with some sect or party, often betray them into mistakes of this kind. Yet whilst we censure a seeming want of charity in others, we should be careful not to fall into real uncharitableness ourselves; and not to condemn any religious persons, merely for abiding by the standard of the bible; lest we

should thereby be guilty of condemning the bible itself, while we are fondly valuing ourselves on our superior Christian charity.

But the person of whom we speak, though attached to the church of England, both in respect of its genuine doctrine, worship, and discipline, was equally a cordial friend to pious persons amongst the dissenters: but, undoubtedly, his more intimate connections lay amongst those of them who accorded in doctrine with his own church; for this description of them appeared to him more occupied in, and more earnest for, the salvation of the souls of men. His rule of judgment, therefore, ought not to be considered as merely having respect to party; nor was it determined by a minute regard to his own sentiments in the more disputable points; but it was formed on the great outlines of doctrine and practice, which are evidently contained in the Scriptures.

4. Our attention should next be directed to the composed manner, in which this honoured and useful servant of God, looked forward to the approach of death. Though he was in general healthy, and of a good constitution; yet for a long time before he died, he was sensible that he grew old, and often spake of his nearness to the eternal world, with a serenity, that shewed such reflections to be familiar, and even satisfactory to him: and when

when indeed it became evident that the solemn season was arrived, there was no occasion to conceal his real situation from him. He considered his sickness as a summons from his gracious Lord, and calmly prepared to comply with it: being surrounded by his children, and recommending them and their's to the blessing of that God and Savior, whom he had trusted, and with whom he had walked; recommending to them his service and salvation, and then calmly resigning his spirit into his gracious hands; he put many in remembrance of dying Jacob, blessing his twelve sons, and then yielding up the ghost:—and the impression made upon the minds of those who beheld the tender, instructive, solemn, and animating scene, will probably not soon be effaced. “Mark
“ the perfect man, and behold the upright: for
“ the end of that man is peace.”

This is by no means intended, as a delineation of the *whole* character, *which we* are considering; but merely as an attempt to point out a few of its most distinguishing and undeniable features, and such as were most obvious to those that were the best acquainted with him; whether they might understand the principles from which they resulted, or not.—Were we to examine minutely, every part of his conduct, in domestic, relative, commercial, and private life, and to descant on it in the style of panegyric, much more might be adduced worthy

of commendation and imitation. If, on the other hand, every part should be rigorously scrutinized, it is not denied, but that blemishes might be described; nay, that even faults might be found. Doubtless, some have been observed, and perhaps lamented, by those who were much conversant with him: but nothing inconsistent with strict probity, enlarged benevolence, genuine piety, and deep humility. The Evangelists have delineated a perfect character in the history of Christ; but no other can be found amongst the whole human race: however, were men in general, in their several stations, enabled to act in the manner that hath been described, how would the miseries of the world be prevented, removed, or mitigated! How harmless, peaceful, and useful would they be to each other, in their families, connections, and in civil society! How happy would they be in themselves! And how happy would they render all around them, notwithstanding their remaining defects and blemishes! When this shall become the general character of mankind, (as it will, when they shall become true Christians,) then wars will cease throughout all the earth, and men will only contend with each other, who shall most abound in love and good works.—We proceed therefore,

II. To consider some of the religious principles, which gave rise to these peculiarities of character and conduct.

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We may conceive of these, as similar to the internal construction of a watch, from which, though unseen, arises its exact outward motion. The whole of what will be adduced on this head, is virtually comprised in the words of the text, of which, the love of Christ forms, as it were, the centre. — In the introduction of this Discourse, some observations have been made on this portion of Scripture, and on St. Paul's leading motives and consequent conduct: and it may here be added, that the same principles must form the main spring of holy activity in the heart of every real Christian; and that a measure of the same constraining love of Christ was the real source of those distinguishing circumstances, in the character and conduct of our honored friend, concerning which we have hitherto been discoursing.

It cannot be expected that a full delineation of the Christian principles can be made in the remainder of the present Discourse. For this, the Reader must be referred to the Scriptures, especially to the New Testament, to that book which this servant of God studied day by day, from which, we again repeat it, he endeavoured to draw his religious principles, and to whose instructions he owed, by God's grace, that character for piety and beneficence, which hath been commended to the Reader's consideration and imitation. — But it may be proper to point out some of those principles,

evidently founded in Scripture, which he was known by his more intimate friends to hold; and which, as centering in the love of Christ, seem to have been most influential on his practice.

If we consult the Bible, we find that man is there considered as standing related to God, as his Creator, Governor, and Judge. From this relation there arise duties and obligations, at once very strict and extensive, and very reasonable and necessary; and we need that redemption of the death of Christ, of which the Apostle speaks, only in consequence of having acted inconsistent with those relations and obligations.—A rational, dependant, and accountable creature, that hath received all his powers and possessions from God; that is here in a state of preparation and probation; whose soul is immortal, and whose body must shortly die, and at length rise again; who must appear before God in judgment, and be placed in a state of unchangeable and eternal happiness or misery, according to his conduct in this present world: I say, such a being, must be allowed to stand in a very important situation; and he who considers this doctrine of his relation to God with hearty self-application, must needs deem himself his servant in all that he does, and his steward in all that he possesses; and he must regard it as his duty, interest, and wisdom, to use, and do every thing with reference to the will, favour, and

and honour of his Sovereign Lord, his liberal Benefactor, his holy, heart-searching Judge, and the righteous Arbiter of his eternal condition. But who is there that has fulfilled, or is naturally disposed thus unreservedly, and heartily to fulfil these duties in their large and spiritual extent? Hence therefore results a consciousness of guilt, and a liableness to condemnation at the tribunal of God. This the apostle intimates, when he says, "then were all dead." Whilst St. Paul measured himself by other rules than the holy, spiritual, and perfect law of God, "He was alive *"without the law:"* but when the commandment "came, sin revived, and he died." So long as men judge of their own conduct by the general maxims and customs of the world, and by the ordinary rules of judgment; they will not readily be induced to plead guilty before God. But "by *"the law is the knowledge of sin;"* and he who understands the extent, spirituality, reasonableness, and excellency of the two great commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all *"thy heart;"* and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour *"as thyself:"* he that judges all his own former and present conduct; his thoughts, words, actions, tempers, motives, and affections, by this rule: he who sees this law perfectly reduced to practice, in the character of Christ, and daily compares his own with it; he, I say, will gradually form a more humble opinion of himself, and perceive, that

that "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God." This will lead him to discover sin in every part of his conduct; and shew him his continual need of mercy and forgiveness; and convince him that neither his person, nor his defective services, can in any other way find acceptance with an holy God. He will thus also discern, that the disposition of his heart is naturally such, that it is incapable of so loving God, and man, except it be renewed and rectified by the energy of divine grace. This humiliation in the sight of God, this broken and contrite heart, this poverty of spirit, form the chief preparation for the due exercise of every Christian grace, and the performance of every Christian duty. It is essential in forming such a character as hath been delineated, both in those things, which the world commends, and those which it censures. This was certainly the judgment which our deceased friend had formed of his own character and conduct: he was fully convinced of the sinfulness of his past life, however blameless in the sight of men: he was aware of the evil of his own heart, and of the manifold defects in every day's conduct; for he weighed the whole in the impartial balance of the sanctuary. These streams, he traced to their fountain, the corruption of the human heart; and he could not refuse to believe the testimony of Scripture, concerning the apostacy and fall of man in our first parents; a doctrine very gloomy indeed

indeed when considered alone; but not so when viewed in its connexion with our redemption by Christ; and by which alone we can explain, and account for the undeniable state of mankind in the present, and in every former age of the world.—He was ready to subscribe to the declarations of Scripture on this subject, without any palliation, and as applicable to himself, as well as to others; and from the time, when his thoughts were first seriously and deeply employed about religion, to the moment, when he breathed his soul into the Redeemer's hands, he could adopt the Publican's prayer, and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner."—And let any man carefully examine the language of the most eminent and approved characters, mentioned in Scripture, as well as the general tenor of that Sacred Volume*; and he will surely find, that this judgment and disposition are always represented as more characteristic of genuine piety, than any other whatsoever.

With these doctrines of man's relations, and obligations to God, his demerit through the breach of them, and his consequent need of the mercies of God; those are inseparably connected, which relate to the real divinity of the Person, and the atonement of the death of Christ. The Scriptures speak of

* Job, chap. xlii. ver. 5, 6. Isaiah, chap. vi. ver. 1—8. Matt. chap. iii. ver. 11—14. chap. viii. ver. 8. Ephes. chap. iii. ver. 8. 1 Tim. chap. i. ver. 15, 16.

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him as "God manifested in the flesh," and "as
 "bearing our sins in his own body on the tree,"
 "suffering *for sins*, the just for the unjust, that
 "he might bring us to God." These great, and
 important truths, and that incomprehensible mystery
 of a Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the God-
 head; our friend, of whom we speak, did not hesi-
 tate to receive in humble adoring faith. He be-
 lieved, that the obedience unto death, of Emmanuel,
 of the incarnate Son of God, with all his concurrent
 debasement and agonies, was intended as an exhibi-
 tion of the justice and holiness of our Supreme Go-
 vernor and Judge; as a display of his hatred of sin,
 and regard to the honor of his law; and as a de-
 claration of man's guilt, and righteous condemna-
 tion, and of his utter inability to ransom, or save his
 own soul: And that this was intended to make
 way for the honorable exercise of mercy to sinners,
 and for the harmony of the divine attributes, in
 the work of man's salvation.—He was satisfied,
 that it was right and reasonable for our offended
 Creator, to appoint the way in which he would
 deign to be reconciled to us; that his infinite
 wisdom had devised, his love provided, and his
 truth revealed this method of our salvation; and
 that it was worthy of God, and suited the case and
 wants of sinful men. He therefore concluded, that
 we can only be justified through faith in Christ, and
 an interest in his merits and atonement; and that
 by him alone, as our risen and ascended High Priest
 and

and Intercessor, we guilty creatures can have access to the Father upon a throne of Grace, and shall at length find admission into Heaven itself.

In a steady belief and profession of these doctrines, and in an avowed reliance on the righteousness, atonement, and intercession of the divine Redeemer, he lived, and died: And believing that there was no salvation in any other, he labored to spread the knowledge of these truths amongst men, and to recommend them to their attention by every means in his power.

From this faith, resulted that constraining love of Christ, of which the Apostle speaks in the Text, and which hath been already mentioned as the ruling principle of our late friend, and of every true Christian.

An apprehension of the dignity and glory of the Redeemer's person, and of the consummate excellency of his character, united with a scriptural view of the suitableness and preciousness of his salvation, and of his infinite condescension to, and compassion for perishing sinners, cannot fail to excite an admiring love of him, and an ardent desire after an interest in his favor and salvation. And when any person, who hath been deeply humbled before God, under a consciousness of his guilt, and hath greatly feared his indignation, finds himself freed from

from his distressing apprehensions, obtains peace of conscience, and enjoys a lively hope of Heaven, by faith in a crucified Savior; the greatness of his deliverance and consolations, the glorious prospects that open to his view, the price that Christ paid for these blessings, and the freeness with which he confers them, when really apprehended, and deeply meditated on, must needs form the mind to gratitude for obligations of such immense and inconceivable value; and this gratitude must shew itself in obedience to the commands and zeal for the glory of him, who, in this, and all other respects, is so worthy of our highest love, and most devoted services.

It may also be observed, that the cross of Christ, in this view of it, is the grand display of the worth of immortal souls, and of the importance of eternal things. When we view this astonishing object, we are struck with the vanity of all earthly pursuits, possessions, enjoyments, and distinctions: It demonstrates the miserable and ruined condition of the whole human race, in themselves; and gives the most affecting discoveries of the love and mercy of God to sinners, as connected with the glory of his justice and holiness: It points out the real nature of true excellence, and of man's happiness, and his proper employment in this life: And it tends to form the believer's mind to a new judgment of almost every object he beholds, and of every subject

subject he considers. This leads him to propose to himself, new ends in whatsoever he does, and to feel new motives to activity ; to copy other examples, and to conduct himself by other maxims, than he formerly did. In short, he is "in Christ Jesus, " a new creature, old things are passed away, be- " hold all things are become new." He now de- sires to concur, as an humble instrument in the hand of his Lord, in promoting that design of glorifying God, and doing good to men, for which the Redeemer became incarnate, and shed his pre- cious blood. Our deceased friend thus "knew " the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though " he were rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, " that we, through his poverty, might be rich : " And this influenced him in the use of that affluence, and the improvement of those talents, which were committed to his stewardship.

Hence also arises the habitual recollection, that we are the servants of Jesus Christ, being now under additional obligations in every thing to do his will. For as our Redeemer, he is become our Lord and Master by many new and endearing ties. He hath many servants on earth, and hath allotted to every man his work : and he will shortly return to take an account of them *. Whosoever firmly believes this, and duly esti- mates his obligations to his Lord, will consider

* Mark chap. xiii. ver. 34—37.

his time, health, abilities, wealth, influence, authority, as no longer his own, to be disposed of according to his natural inclinations, or for his own reputation; but as Christ's, to be made use of according to his commands, and for his glory: thus he will be distinguished from those who will not have Christ to reign over them; and from those who call him Lord, but will not obey him: and his faith will appear to have wrought by love of Christ, of Christians, and of all men. Yet considering his obligations, and his prospect of a glorious recompence, he will deem all his services little, and will be ready for any expensive, or self-denying obedience, to which he may be called. But whilst he obeys his Master in those liberal actions, which the world approves, he must also do his will in many things that will disgust multitudes; as they tend to criminate their conduct, and as they run counter to all their maxims and fashions. For the servant of Christ must please his Master, and cannot often please men also; nor must he call good evil, or evil good, out of complaisance to the sentiments of his neighbours.

The judgment which the believer has formed of the end, for which he is continued in this present world, has also much influence upon his conduct and character. After he hath obtained a comfortable persuasion of his acceptance with God,

God, he is generally left to spend some years in this world of sin and sorrow; but he is a stranger on earth, and is travelling forward to his home, in Heaven. He does not, therefore, consider the acquisition of wealth, the enjoyment of ease and earthly pleasure, or the attainment of honor, or authority, as the end for which his life is continued: his ambition is fixed upon nobler objects. Here he is called upon to glorify God, and to do what good he can to mankind; and all other concerns appear in his view mean and inconsiderable, if they do not, in some measure, subserve these great designs. At the same time, his life is rendered comfortable to him by his enjoyment of peace of conscience, and communion with God: by the pleasure of doing his will, and being useful; and by the hope, and earnest of heavenly felicity; and he only deems life a blessing, because introductory to a happier state: he desires to consider death, (though terrible to nature,) as the termination of all his conflicts and troubles, and to do every thing with reference to his latter end.—These were principles, which abode in the mind of that person, whose character is here proposed as an example to those especially, of his own line and rank in life.

Another doctrine of the Scriptures, which we must not omit to mention, as firmly believed by our late friend, and as essential in forming that

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character,

character, which hath been described, is that of our entire dependance on the influences of the Holy Spirit, in every thing, that relates to the knowledge and practice of true and spiritual religion. — It cannot be expected, that within the compass of one Discourse, any regular defence can be made of all the great doctrines of Christianity; much less that all the profane objections often made to them can be answered: but it would be an inexcusable omission, if something were not spoken very explicitly upon this most important subject; which is so far removed from the contemplation of men in general, and does such violence to the worldliness of all their ideas, that it is no wonder they should count the very mention of it enthusiastic; however insisted upon in the Bible, and admitted into the common service of our Church, and however consistent it may be shewn to be with true and enlightened reason.

Let any one reflect on that part of the character, which we have delineated, that relates to his devotional duties; and if this be admitted to be a real and essential part of religion, the reasonableness, and even the necessity of believing this doctrine must be undeniably evinced. For why should a man employ himself so earnestly in the exercises of devotion? or indeed why should he pray at all for any of those things, which relate to the improvement of his heart, who denies that such influences

fluences of the Spirit of God are to be expected by us, and supposes, that he can do all that is requisite by his own unassisted power and resolution?

The prayers which we offer to the Lord, "to create in us a clean heart, and to renew a right spirit within us," are, next to our praises and thanksgivings, by far the most spiritual part of our religious worship, and accord most to the patterns of devotion contained in the Scriptures; and if these were expunged, we should have scarce any thing to ask, which could decidedly mark the spiritual prayers of a true Christian, from the carnal and selfish desires of an ungodly man.—The sincerity and reality of our devotions, if indeed we ask for spiritual blessings, must therefore entirely depend on our conviction, that we need the assistance which we crave, and that we may expect it upon the warrant of God's word: and the coldness and inattention, which so many feel, when they affect to pray, necessarily arises from, and must always accompany, their unbelief in respect of this doctrine. For how can they ask any thing of God in good earnest, who deem it no part of Christianity to believe, that he will bestow it upon them? Unless men will therefore condemn all prayer for spiritual blessings as irrational; they cannot consistently blame the belief in the Holy Spirit of God, as the Author of all true wisdom and holiness in real Christians. On the contrary,

it is necessary, to give any meaning to our prayers, that we should be firmly established in this faith, and expectation.

Indeed we do not want the assistance of the Holy Spirit for many outward performances, that are counted good and honorable in the false estimation of mankind; but that spiritual knowledge of religious truth, and that holiness of heart which are essential to, and inseparably connected with salvation, entirely proceed from his sacred influences, as the Scripture abundantly testifies; "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his: and as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons, (or children,) of God." That "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," is one plain testimony of Scripture: and that the Holy Spirit of God is the author of all true holiness in any of our fallen race, is a doctrine equally laid down there. Holiness consists in conformity to the image, and law of God, to the perfect example of Christ, to the dispositions of angels, and to the employments and pleasures of Heaven. He, who deeply meditates on these subjects, will evidently perceive, that he is not in himself holy, and that he cannot make himself so. Yet is this state of the heart as necessary to happiness, as the forgiveness of our sins,

sins, and our reconciliation unto God. The recovery of fallen man to holiness, or to a spiritual and heavenly state of the understanding, judgment, will, affections, imagination, memory, and conscience, is the work of the Holy Spirit. The good dispositions and actions, which spring from thence, are called the fruits of the Spirit; and the Holy Spirit is promised to be given, for these purposes, to them that ask for this blessing in the name of our Heavenly Advocate. But until a man be convinced of this, and apply for them in earnest prayer, he cannot so much as seek holiness, in the way prescribed by the word of God.

Again, the man, who knows how dependant he is on that Sacred Influence, will be afraid of grieving, or quenching the Spirit by evil tempers, by selfishness, or sinful indulgences; and will be thereby excited to a watchfulness, and circumspection in his words and works, which is little conceived of by those, who deny or neglect this doctrine: he will become more careful to cherish, and comply with all holy emotions and affections, more diligent in attending on the means of Grace, and more cautious in shunning all places and companies, which counteract the influences of this Sacred Comforter. And doubtless this persuasion and dependance tended greatly to influence the

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conduct,

conduct, and to form the character, which are the subject of this Discourse.

It must however be allowed; that there is such a thing as enthusiasm, and that it is often productive of fatal delusions, and other serious evils to mankind; and he who expects to discover truth, or the state of his soul, or his duty, by immediate revelations, or suggestions of the Spirit to his mind, without a proper attention to the written word of God, as the standard and rule of doctrine, practice, and experience; is verging to that perilous extreme. But to depend on the influences of the Holy Spirit, to guide us into the knowledge of those truths, which are revealed in the Scripture; or to form our minds to those holy affections and dispositions, to enable us to those duties, and to put us in possession of that hope, peace and consolation, to which the Bible calls us; cannot be chargeable with enthusiasm by those, who believe that blessed book; and this is all that we mean to contend for.

Lastly, The view, which the Christian has attained of the final account, and retribution; has great influence upon him. Although he believes, that a sinner can only be justified before God, by faith in Christ; yet he also believes, that every justified person will be *graciously* rewarded, probably both in the measure of his present consolations, and certainly, in the degree of his future glory and felicity,

city, according to his present diligence, zeal, and faithfulness: and that the good works of true Christians will be produced before the assembled world, as the evidences of their faith in, and love of Christ; even as the wickedness, and negligence of mere professors, will be produced as proofs of their hypocrisy, impenitence, and unbelief. In hope, therefore, of being shortly welcomed by his condescending and gracious Lord and Savior, saying to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," this exemplary disciple of Christ, continued to improve his talents to the end of his life; and no doubt he is now entered into his blessed rest, and his works do follow him, and his Lord doth honor him; according as he hath said, "Them that honor me, I will honor, but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

These were some of those principles, which combined their influence, to form the character before us; and if their tendency be properly estimated, they will be found fully adequate to the effects, which have been ascribed to them: nay, they would produce far greater, and more excellent effects upon the conduct of mankind, than we ever witnessed or heard of, if they were complete in their subsistence and operation; and if they were not counter-

acted by a variety of internal, and external impediments, in this world of imperfection, incumbrance, and temptation. Let us then proceed,

III. To shew that these same principles, wherever they exist, must of course produce the same effects; allowing indeed for difference of situation, natural temper, and other circumstances.

An habitual apprehension of our relation to God, and the eternal world, and of those obligations which thence arise; the custom of judging every one of our thoughts, words, and actions, according to the holy and spiritual law of God; that humiliation of heart, which is the never failing effect of this severe and exact self-examination; that firm belief of the doctrines of salvation for sinners, through the merits and sufferings of the incarnate Son of God, and by faith in his name; that peace and hope, which spring from reliance on the mercy of God in him; that love, and gratitude, which the rejoicing believer feels towards his adorable Redeemer, and friend; that view of every object in its relation to the cross of Christ; that willing subjection to him, as our beloved Lord and Master; that knowledge of the true value and comfort of life, and that daily preparation for death; that sincere prayer to God for, and constant dependance on, the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit; and that prospect of the day of judgment, and the glorious recompence then to be awarded to us by our reconciled God, which have been spoken of,

of, need only to be clearly stated, in order to shew that they cannot fail to have a most powerful effect, when with combined energy they operate from year to year, in regulating our dispositions, affections, pursuits, and actions. They will assuredly give a peculiar direction to the exercise of a man's abilities; and the use of his influence, time, and possessions; they will continue to insinuate themselves into every operation of his mind, and every undertaking of his life; they will gradually turn all his purposes and pursuits into one channel, and thus lead him to contract habits, in many respects opposite to those of other men, who are uninfluenced by them. Nor should we have cause to wonder at any degree of exertion, self-denial, or liberality, to which a man thus impelled should at length attain; when the will of his Lord, the honor of his cause, the relief, comfort and benefit of those, whom he deigns to acknowledge as his brethren and friends, or the salvation of immortal souls demand them of him. And we might reasonably expect, that he would be ready to abridge himself of every needless pleasure; to renounce opportunities of accumulating wealth, or acquiring honor and distinction; nay to venture, and even to lay down his life, to subserve those great ends, for which the Lord of Glory shed his precious blood.

No application of mind, no contrivance to render other employments subservient to those important

portant objects, could in such a case appear wonderful. The precepts and example of Christ; love to him, and his people; compassion to perishing sinners; a sense of duty; a wise regard to present comfort, and to that of a dying hour, and to the interests of eternity, must all concur in urging the believer to devote his all, to the service of his God and Savior. The utmost that he can do, must appear little, when compared with his infinite obligations, and the perfection of his rule: he must still find much to be ashamed of, and be left to the last, entirely dependant on the mercy of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ. And indeed the only thing to be wondered at, is, that we are so feebly influenced by so many and powerful principles, and that we are so often induced to forget, and to act contrary to them,

The same principles, cannot fail to lead the Christian to judge of other men by the same rules; and whilst his heart melts with compassion towards them; and his hand is stretched out to relieve the miseries of his bitterest enemies, and the vilest of the human species; he cannot but judge, that the most of them are thronging the broad road to destruction; nor can he be induced to flatter those with the hope of heaven, who continue strangers and enemies to this great salvation; or to amuse them with encomiums on their dignity, and on the merit of their supposed virtues,
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of which the highest object, is self-exaltation. This habitual reverence for the example, precepts, authority, and honor of Christ must prevent him from conforming to the fashions, or courting the friendship of a world, which is in rebellion against him: and the same principles that constrain him to the most enlarged beneficence, induce him also stiffly to refuse compliances that are contrary to his conscience, and with an holy singularity to shun all places and avocations, which interfere with his walking in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless. They evidently tend to produce at once, abstraction from worldly pleasures, and a serenity and cheerfulness of mind without them: they teach at the same time frugality in personal expence, and an enlarged scale of charity; and they render that course of life delightful, which appears wearisome for its sameness, and melancholy through its seriousness, to those who have not experienced, and are, as yet, incapable of relishing its exalted and refined satisfactions. And finally, whilst so many tremble at, or run away from the thought of death, through apprehensions of meeting something far worse than the most distressing evils of life; these principles must conduce to a composure of mind in looking forward to the concluding scene, and in the expectation of being then admitted into a far happier state. A right understanding of the outlines of evangelical doctrine,

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will discover the Christian to be consistent with himself, even in those parts of his conduct that appear most discordant with each other: and only inconsistent in coming so short of perfection.

These principles operating upon the mind of an apostle, whose endowments were proportioned to his mission and authority, and whose opportunities were almost as extensive as his zeal and philanthropy, formed the character of St. Paul. All his self-denying, persevering, and almost incredible labours; his patient sufferings; his exemplary holiness; his extensive usefulness, and whatever distinguished him from other men, arose from these, and similar principles, through the operation of the Holy Spirit. They glowed with such ardour, and wrought with such energy in his heart, that "he counted not his life dear unto himself, " so that he might finish his course with joy, " and the ministry, that he had received of the " Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace " of God."

They have also combined their influence in forming the characters, and directing the conduct of that glorious Army of Martyrs, who, in different ages and places, have chosen to suffer the extremity of torture, and to expire on the rack, or in the flames, rather than deny the truth, dishonor the name, or violate the commands of their beloved Savior.

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When such principles abound in the heart of a Parish Minister, or an ordinary Pastor of moderate talents, they produce plain, faithful, affectionate preaching; holy exemplary living; benevolence to the bodies, as well as love to the souls of his people; a constant attention to the various parts of his important work, as the pleasure and business of his life; a disposition to watch for opportunities of doing good; a perseverance, with meekness and patience under discouragements, and amidst reproaches, contempt, and ingratitude; and a mind contented with a very moderate subsistence, and evidently superior to the love of filthy lucre.—When superior talents, or extraordinary circumstances, concur with them, they form the Missionary and Evangelist; who must expect to struggle with difficulties, endure hardship, and encounter scorn and opposition proportioned to the importance and usefulness of his peculiar station and service.

When they animate the breast of a King, they form a David, an Hezekiah, a Josiah, who employ their authority and influence, with unwearied attention, to promote the cause of God, the interests of piety, the peace of kingdoms, and the welfare of mankind, by all means consistent with the rights of conscience, and the precepts of God's word. They will influence the Statesman and Senator to devise, arrange, and execute with fortitude and perse-

perseverance, all such plans, as he deems conducive to the same great ends. The man of affluence, or of large commercial dealings, will emulate the example before us; and every one, down to the lowest mechanic, or menial servant, if led by these principles, will fill up his circle, and employ his ability to the glory of God, the ornament of the Gospel, and the good of mankind, by a conscientious obedience to the precepts of Christ, in the various relations and occupations of life. Nor will this, in any instance, be wholly without success; though in the higher orders of Society, the light of such examples will be more conspicuous, and their beneficial effects more extensive.

It now only remains for us to conclude the subject, by drawing from these premises a few important practical inferences.

1. Instead of looking upon the character before us, as a sort of prodigy, to be gazed at with unmeaning admiration; we should remember, that every man is equally bound both to receive these principles into his heart by a lively faith, and to act from them in this manner, according to his station in life, his abilities, and opportunities: nay, if we speak strictly on the subject, that even this is far less, than is every man's bounden duty. The perfection of Christ's obedience unto death was no more, than the holy law of God required of him,

as Man, and Mediator, in his *peculiar* circumstances; and what followed, of course from his loving the Lord with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself. After his example, as St. John testifies, "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren:" this perfect law, is the rule, and standard of duty to every man; and all that comes short of it, is sin, and needs forgiveness. And hence arises that humiliating, yet animating doctrine, that we are justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption, that is in Christ Jesus. Although no man therefore perfectly obeys the whole law, in any part of his life, and no true Christian expects to be justified on the ground of his own good works: yet these principles form every man, who receives them, to an obedience of the heart, springing out of love to God in Christ, and causing him habitually to yield up himself to his service. If all men were influenced by them, they would be habitually upright, benevolent, pious, temperate, and useful, according to their abilities and opportunities: and did true Christianity abound, such characters would be common in the court, senate, city, country, and amongst all ranks and professions in the community.

2. I observe, how effectual the principles of the Gospel are, in promoting moral goodness; and how they animate men of like passions and nature with the most sinful of the human race, to such a pitch

pitch of exertion, in the service of God, and of their fellow-creatures, as no human system ever pretended to effect; and such as many, who know little of religion, seem hardly to have an idea of.

In support of this inference, we appeal to their genuine tendency, and we appeal to facts and characters. Nor need we go back to St. Paul, or the primitive Christians, or to ancient reformers and martyrs. Even our degenerate times may boast of a Howard, and a Thornton, who in different ways have caused astonished multitudes to applaud their disinterested, and generous philanthropy, who have not understood that the love of Christ constrained them thus to act, and who have not thought themselves required to imitate their examples. Indeed every town, village and street, where these principles are taught, received and understood, produce characters not so much inferior in intrinsic excellence, as in opportunities of exhibiting it upon a more conspicuous theatre; as those, who are conversant with them, can testify. It is indeed allowed, that there are also vain talkers and deceivers, who profess some of the same principles, and distort them by extravagant representations, or disgrace them by gross immoralities. But this fulfils the Scriptures, in which it is foretold, that such men would arise; and that when the good Seed of the Word was sown, an enemy would come, and sow

few tares in the same field. Let then such persons as would know the truth, endeavour to divest themselves of prejudices; and after careful examination, let them decide whether the greatest number of evidently good, and useful men, of every rank and profession in the community, be not found amongst those, who are zealous for the principles of the gospel, as they have here been proposed to the reader's consideration.

3. Let it be seriously enquired, who are the best friends of mankind, they who neglect these principles of the gospel, or perhaps even zealously oppose them, that they may establish certain reveries and conjectures, which they dignify with the names of philosophy, or rational religion; or they who call sinners to repentance, and faith in the Son of God; to the love of Him who died for us, and rose again; to the love of their neighbours after his example, and in obedience to his precepts; and whilst they humbly rely only on his meritorious obedience, and propitiatory sufferings, exhort men to prove themselves indeed his disciples, by being zealous of good works?

Lastly, Can Christianity, even as here feebly and imperfectly delineated, and as illustrated by an example, in which it was in some measure reduced to practice, be denied to be beautiful, excellent, and beneficial to mankind? What then is wanting, but

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that all who believe, and love these truths, should aim to be such living sermons, as may convince all around them of the superior excellence and efficacy of their principles: and to shew that the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, doth indeed teach men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world?

Let us then call upon ourselves, and each other, to let our light shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in Heaven: and let us continually beg of him to communicate to us more abundantly his sanctifying Spirit, that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. To Him therefore in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all glory, honor, adoration, and thanksgiving, now and for evermore.



F I N I S.

